

Swine Flu Hotline Answer Sheet

Hotline Answers/Swine Flu 8

Date: May 18, 2009

Time: 4:30 p.m. (*Italics indicates updated information.*)

Is there *H1N1* flu in Idaho?

Yes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed 9 cases of H1N1 (swine) flu infection in *the state*. *Two of those cases are in Kootenai County. The case confirmed this week is in a child at Ramsey Elementary School in Coeur d'Alene.*

The child stayed home while contagious and is no longer contagious. The child is recovering without hospitalization.

Shouldn't the school district close Ramsey Elementary?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now advises schools to prevent spread of the H1N1 flu with early identification of sick students and staff and asking them to stay home until they're no longer contagious. It also advises promoting good hygiene in the schools.

Are there other cases being tested from north Idaho?

One case from the five northern counties is pending. There have been 407 tests statewide and 9 of those were confirmed with H1N1. Two of those were in Kootenai County.

What are you doing to protect me from swine flu?

Panhandle Health District has epidemiologists or "disease detectives" who follow an established response plan in an outbreak. They:

- enlist the help of schools, governments, health care providers and others to keep track of flu activity;
- work with state and national health officials to identify, monitor and investigate flu samples;
- advise communities how to protect themselves and help prevent infection and spread of the virus.

Is this swine flu virus contagious?

Yes. It is contagious and spreads from person to person. However, it is not known yet how easily it spreads between people.

What are the signs and symptoms of swine flu in people?

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to seasonal flu:

- fever
- cough
- sore throat
- body aches
- headache
- chills
- fatigue

Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting. Like the seasonal flu, swine flu may worsen chronic medical conditions.

Are there different signs and symptoms of flu for children?

Children under five years have increased risk of serious complications from the flu. Parents should call their healthcare provider if their child:

- Develops any fever of more than 100.4° F in the first 3 months of life, 101° F or greater between 3 and 6 months, or 103° F after 6 months of age.
- Has trouble breathing, appears to have ear or face pain, or looks very ill. Some children develop complications from the flu, such as pneumonia or ear or sinus infections.
- Has a cough that worsens or that lingers more than a week.

How does swine flu spread?

The swine flu virus spreads through the air, mainly from person to person through coughing and sneezing. People may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth, eyes or nose. You don't catch it from eating pork.

How can someone with the flu infect someone else?

Infected people may infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to seven days after becoming sick. That means you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick.

What should I do to keep from getting the flu?

- Wash your hands! Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing into them. Wash your hands after touching hard surfaces, like doorknobs or light switches, which someone with flu germs may have touched.
- Keep your distance from anyone who is sick. Three to six feet
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Try to stay in good general health—get plenty of sleep, stay physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.
- If you do get sick, stay home and don't infect others.

What should I do if I'm concerned about a potential exposure?

- Monitor yourself for 7 days from the time of the exposure, for flu symptoms.
- Maintain a 3-6 foot distance from other people. Wash your hands often.
- If, within the 7 day period you do experience flu-like symptoms or a fever, stay home.
- Call your health care provider to discuss your concerns.

Where can I get a test to see if I have swine flu?

Call your doctor or health care provider. Your healthcare provider will decide if you need a test based on your symptoms and other clinical factors. Panhandle Health District has no doctors on staff and doesn't test. After Hours and Immediate Care clinics and the Dirne Clinic have doctors on staff and do test. Call first!

Why does it take so long for the test results to come back?

Testing begins locally with a Rapid Flu test. The confirmation process is at the Idaho State Lab in Boise.

Should I go to work if I am sick?

Sick people shouldn't work. If you are sick with flu-like symptoms you should stay home for seven days from the start of your symptoms.